

A  
S E R M O N

Preached before the

K I N G

A T

W H I T E - H A L L

O N

Christmass-Day, 1684.

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By *HUMFREY GOWER, D.D.*  
and Master of *St John's College in Cambridge.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed by *S. Roycroft*, for *Robert Clavel* at the *Peacock*  
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GALAT. III. 21, 22.

*Is the Law then against the Promises of God? God forbid: For if there had been a Law given, which could have given life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law.*

*But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

**W**E cannot more properly celebrate the Memory of the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord, (the Pious purpose of our present Assembling) than by fixing our Meditations on the Nature, Reason, and Design of that most wonderful Undertaking and Condescension of the Son of God. This is a sure way to sanctifie our *Feast*, and make it truly an *Holy Day*. Not that we are to neglect the History: The bare Narrative of the thing done affords very proper and useful entertainment for this Season; It refreshes the Memory in all the mighty particulars of this stupendious Transaction, and so helps to settle them firmer in the Mind; it raises and warms the Fancy, excites and quickens the Affections of the Soul, all which have very considerable influence upon *Practice*. This is to keep *Holy-day* too; to listen with the Shepherds, to the Glad-tydings of the bright Ambassadour of Heaven, and the triumphant Melody of

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the Celestial Choir, which assisted at that Solemnity; then to accompany the *Eastern Sages* conducted by a Light held out from Heaven, to behold the place where the infinite Infant lay; to read the wondrous History of the New-born-Babe, as it was fairly written, long before his Birth, in the Prophecies of the Old Testament, concerning the *Tribe*, the *Family*, the *Name*, the *Place*, the *Time*, and the *Manner* of the *Nativity* of Him, who was *God* as well as *Man*. All this is the work of the Day, and you have done it often, and the Church hath taken care by the Psalms and Lessons, and other parts of the proper Service, that it should never be quite omitted.

But there is still further and more lofty matter of Meditation in the Mercies and Mysteries of this Day: A Day contriv'd from all Eternity, prefigur'd from all Antiquity, which the *Fulness of Time* produc'd, which Holy Church and Holy Men in all Ages gladly commemorate, which Angels gaze at with Ecstasie and Rapture, and which both Men and Angels shall eternally celebrate with shouts of Joy and everlasting *Hallelujah's*. Some part of this abounding Theme is presented to you by the words of my Text, in which is contain'd this principal Proposition; That the *Law* was but an Introduction, or Dispensation preparatory to the *Gospel*; and the Proof of it taken from the Insufficiency of the Law to effect what God mainly propos'd to himself, the eternal Happiness of Mankind. *For if there had been, a Law given, which could have given life, verily Righteousness*



*eousness should have been by the Law. But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.*

In the whole Argument, as it lies in these words, there are, at least, four Particulars or Propositions:

First, That Man of himself has no Title to Immortal Life. This is implied and supposed, because God contrives a way to render him fairly capable of being saved.

1.

Secondly, God sincerely desires the Life, that is, the Salvation of Men, and has propos'd Means regularly to Accomplish it.

2.

Thirdly, This was not, could not be, by the Law of Moses; But,

3.

Fourthly, By the Grace and Mercy exhibited to the World in Jesus Christ; or, in the words of the Text, by the Promise, which by Faith of Jesus Christ, is given to them that believe.

4.

As for the first of these; It is very evident, that we are naturally without any plea for Eternal Life. The promise of Immortality was free unmerited Bounty, even to our First Parents, whilst they stood adorned with all the beauties of a spotless Innocence. The longest life of Man all spent in most unblemished uniform Obedience to his Creators Laws could merit nothing at all, much less the inestimable reward of Everlasting Glory. Death, indeed, is, as we are told, the natural and dearly earn'd wages of Sin, but *Eternal Life* is the gift of God. The first

I.

and

and perfectest of our Kind could, at the best, be but an *unprofitable* Servant to the Infinite Master that he served. Nay, it was the peculiar Privilege and Happiness of his Nature, that he was able to perform a *steady and perpetual* Obedience to all his Creators Will. Therefore the *Psalmist* prays for more degrees of such Spiritual Power, and pleads his being a Creature to move his Maker to bestow them on him. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn thy Commandments.* Mans own Being, the excellent endowments of his Nature, his very Meat and Drink are liberal and abundant Wages for that Service, which is naturally due from the Creature to the Creator, and is as duly paid by all, Man only excepted, who yet is most obliged to it, as enjoying great Advantages, and even an Imperial Prerogative above all the rest; as if for Him alone the whole Fabrick of Heaven and Earth had been produc'd. *Mine hand hath laid the foundation of the Earth, and my right hand hath spann'd the Heavens,* saith the Lord by his holy Prophet, *when I call unto them, they stand up together.* Good reason, sure, that they should stand up, and be at the Call of Him, who gave them and supports them in their Being. Frogs and Locusts, and all Vermin come and go, as they are commanded off and on by the Sovereign Word of their Almighty Maker. The Ravens feed one Prophet, a Lion tears another; but hungry and ravenous, as they were, those Lions chole to fast and starve rather than

Psal. 119. 73.

Esa. 48. 13.

than hurt a third: A Fish swallows up a fourth, and then harmlesly restores him to Dry-land, and all at the Command of God. *The Stars in their courses* Judg. 5. 20. *fight against Sifera: Fire and Hail, Snow and Vapor,* Psal. 148. 8. *and Stormy Wind are fulfilling his Word:* These and all things else rejoyce in his Commandment, are ready upon Earth when need is, and when their time is come, they *shall not transgress his Word, &c.* Eccus. 39. 31. But Man, only Man, like a pamper'd Rebel, grown great and insolent by the abus'd Indulgence of his Prince, boggled at the first and easiest Trial of his Obedience, and proudly disdain'd to acknowledge any Lord over him.

But what if he does his best? What has he of his own to offer to his God? *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompenced unto him again?* Adam himself had nothing but what was given him, why should he glory then as if he had not received it? But then, again, what proportion is there between finite Performances and infinite Rewards? Nay, tho we undergo the sharpest afflictions in the discharge of our Duties, we are to reckon with St. Paul, *that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed,* as in one place, *that far more exceeding and eternal weight of* 2 Cor. 4. 17. *Glory, as he expresseth it in another.* So that it must be agreed, as a thing evident both from Scripture and right Reason, that Man has no Natural and Original Title to an happy Everlasting Life. But, yet, for all that, it is most certain that God did bestow

on him an Immortal Soul, not with a design to destroy it again, but on purpose that he might live for ever with himself in Eternal Glory. But the Apostate *Seraphim* envied so great a Privilege to a *New-made* Creature, so far inferiour to himself, and Man was presently cheated of it, soon tempted to forfeit his Inheritance by violating an easie Precept, that had been given him as a trial of his Obedience and the Condition of all the Happiness that was promised; which leads to the Second Proposition contained in the Text.

2.

For to our Comfort we know, that God did not desert Man, miserable Man, fall'n, as he was, helpless and hopeless in himself, but immediately reach'd down his hand from Heaven, and rais'd him from the groveling condition wherein he lay, set him on his feet again, and bid him look up and make a new Adventure for a Crown of Glory. He remits the forfeiture of the broken Covenant, and vouchsafes to enter on a new Treaty with his revolted Creature, affording him *a better Hope, a better Covenant, established upon better Promises*. Thus was it the happiness of the Creature, that God still propos'd and pursued; in all his dispensations towards the Sons of Men.

Heb. 7. 19.   
 Heb. 8. 6.

It is true, indeed; that under the Oeconomy of the Law the Kingdom of Heaven and Eternal Life were but imperfectly discover'd through Veils, and Signs, and Types, Mysteries and Metaphors, Shadows, Clouds and Darknes, suitable to the meaner

genius of that Discipline, which was but imperfect, as *Eusebius* expresseth it, and agreeable to the weakness of that Childish People, who were to be managed and conducted by it. But it is absurd to conclude from thence, That the utmost Felicity proposed to the *Jews* was only a fat Land and a long Life, Milk and Hony, Peace and Plenty, and, at the last, the Burial, perhaps, of Men, but the Death of Bruits. If this were all, the Swine they loath'd were as happy as themselves. But they were Men, a Nation highly favour'd and honour'd by God, far above all other Families of the Earth; a *Peculiar* and *Chosen* People, to whom were committed the Oracles of God; and to whom pertained the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises: whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came. They were our Elder Brothers, as it were, and the First-born of the World; and that Inheritance, which we now all so happily enjoy in common, seemed, for a good while, to be entail'd only on the House of *Jacob*.

The very Points in controverſie between the *Pharisees* and the *Sadduces* sufficiently prove, that the Expectations of another Life had been of old receiv'd and entertain'd by that People. And our Saviour put to silence those that ventur'd to deny it, by a plain proof of the Matter drawn from the very *Pentateuch*, that small Portion of Scripture, which the *Sadduces* would own for Authentick Canon.

Ἀπὸ τοῦ νηπι-  
οῦς καὶ ἀδελφῶν  
καὶ πάντων ἁλλοῦς.  
Euseb. Dem. E-  
vang. lib. 1. c. 6.  
— νηπιῶν καὶ  
ἀδελφῶν ἰου-  
δαίων ἐπίτε-  
ρος καὶ οἰκονό-  
μου. Id. ibid.



Many places there are in the Books of the *Prophets*, which cannot receive a full Interpretation without the supposition of a Future State, amongst which *Porphyrie* himself cannot hinder, but that of *Daniel* will still be one: *Many of them that sleep in the Dust shall awake, some to Everlasting Life, and some to Shame and Everlasting Contempt*; to which, as the Father observes, our Saviour makes a just Parallel in those words: *All that are in the Grave shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Resurrection of Damnation.* The famous Petition of the Thief on the Cross, and our Saviours gracious Reply to it, together with many plain and direct Passages in *Josephus* and the most Ancient *Rabbins*, concerning a Future Felicity for the *Pious*, and Misery for *Irreligious* Persons, put it out of all doubt, that the Doctrine of a Future Life was far from being so strange and unreceiv'd a Thing amongst the *Jews*, as some would represent it. We need not therefore wonder to find in the Catalogue of *Old Testament-Saints*, recorded in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; *Many that were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* But then these gracious Purposes of God for our Eternal Good were far more illustriously manifested in the Gospel, through which Christ *bath brought Life and Immortality to light.* And that makes way for our Third Proposition.

That

Dan. 12. 2, 3.

St. Aug. de Civ.

Dei, lib. 20. c. 23.

John 5. 28, 29.

Heb. 11. 35.

2 Tim. 1. 10.

That the Life intended for, and proposed to man could not be obtain'd by the Law of *Moses*; and therefore all must be devolv'd on the *Fourth*, the Mercy and Promise of God, which, by Faith of *Jesus Christ* is given to them that believe. I need not lead you from the *Text* or *Chapter*, of which it is a part, to find abundant proof of the Impotency of the Law of *Moses*: It is the Argument almost of every Verse. As many as are of the Works of the Law are under the Curse. No Man is justified by the Law in the sight of God. The same had been avouch'd twice or thrice in the former Chapter. It is needless to allege more Testimonies of the Truth of a thing so evident. It is the Argument not only of this *Epistle*, but, in a manner, of the whole Book of God: It is the very Foundation of the Gospel: If it be otherwise, *Christ* died in vain, and our Faith is vain. For if that first Covenant had been faultless, there should no place have been sought for the second. 3. Verse 10, 11. Chap. 2. 16. Heb. 8. 2.

Here therefore happily begins our *Fourth* Particular, the Oeconomy of the Gospel. For God hath concluded all under Unbelief, that he might have mercy upon All: Or in the words of my Text, The Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by Faith of *Jesus Christ* might be given to them that believe. There was no room for Repentance, for second Thoughts, allowed by the Tenour of the former Covenants: In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. That was the unrelenting Rigour of the first Law; and the rigid Condition of the Law of *Moses*. 4. Rom. 11. 32.

Gal. 3. 10.

Moses is carefully remembred by the *Apostle* in this Chapter: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* A very uncomfortable and frightful Sanction it is, sufficient, of it self, to represent that Law as a *Schoolmaster*, as it is stil'd, qualified not only to bring, but to drive us unto *Christ*.

Thanks be therefore to God through *Jesus Christ* our Lord, who by the propitious Mystery of *this Day*, and the saving Consequences of it, *hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law*, Himself being made a *Curse* for us; who did all that could be requir'd in the greatest Rigour, and yet suffer'd too the greatest; that we, who of our selves could do nothing, as we ought to do, might yet suffer nothing; but, being by him enabled to *do all things*, may be made *Heirs*, even *joynt Heirs* with himself of Eternal Glory. And this it is, that makes up our present Rejoycing. The *Birth* of Christ was the *Death* of the Law: For He was *the End of the Law*, and put an end to it also, as it is taken in competition with the *Gospel*.

For we well know that it is not always so, and therefore can easily reconcile those different and contrary Accounts, which are given of it in the New Testament.

As it is considered absolutely in it self, without regard and subordination to our Blessed Lord, who gives strength for the fulfilling of the *Moral* part of it, and is the substance and accomplishment of the

*Ceremonial*; it is represented full of Terrors as to Man, and under Characters of Disparagement and Diminution to it self. Thus it is said to be *abolished* and *disannull'd*, that it was but *until John*; that it was *given by Moses*, who was *faithful*, but as a *Servant*; whereas *Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ*, who is *Lord and Heir of all things*: That it *stops every Mouth*, and makes all the World become *guilty before God*; that it cannot *Justifie* or make *Righteous*: It is not only reflected on as a less *excellent Ministry*, a *Covenant not faultless, unprofitable, decayed, waxen old, a Shadow*, and *vanishing away*; but it is likewise severely censured as an *unsupportable Yoke*, and that which worketh *Wrath and Death*: It is said indeed to be *weak*; but for all that we are told, that it is the *strength of Sin*, a *Letter that killeth*, and the *Ministration of Condemnation and Death*; that it is a *Curse and Enmity*, which *Christ abolished and slew*, the *oldness of the Letter*, and *dead*; that there was *made of necessity a change of the Law*, and accordingly that *we are not now under the Law, but under Grace*. At this rate is it expos'd and vilified, when consider'd as opposite to, or distinct in part or in whole from the Dispensation of the *Gospel*.

But there is another view of it, and a much better prospect, when it is represented as it was intended to be a Dispensation preparatory and subordinate to the *Gospel*; A Law of Life and Manners, improv'd, fulfil'd and enforced by our Saviour, who plentifully furnisheth out Grace and Strength, to enable

us to live up to the Precepts of it in an *Evangelical* Perfection. And thus it will soon appear, that the *Law* is not *against the Promises of God*, according to my Text. For we find our Blessed Saviour making a solemn and very early Protestation, even in his first Sermon, that he came *not to destroy, but to fulfil the Law*, that not a jot of it should be unfulfill'd, that it is easier for *Heaven and Earth to pass away*, than *one tittle of the Law to fail*. And *St. Paul* establish'd the *Christian Faith by the Law of Moses*, as well as by the *Prophets*; and thus now *the Doers of the Law shall be justified*; and we read often of the *Righteousness of the Law*, and that it is not made *void through Faith*: *God forbid*, saith *St. Paul*, *yea, we establish the Law*. And thus *the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, and just and good*. Thus too it is *Spiritual*, to be delighted in, a *Commandment ordain'd unto Life*, and a means to *bring us unto Christ*. King *David* himself, who composed so many Hymns on purpose to celebrate and adorn the *Law*, and that long *Alphabetical Octionary*, the *119th Psalm*, on that single Subject, could not say more in honour of it, than what I have already, or may further be alledged for that purpose, from the *Scriptures of the New-Testament*. But then the *Law* is understood to be a kind of *Gospel*, a Dispensation typical and significative of *Christ*: According to what the Great Father tells us\*, That the *Law* was but the *Gospel* mask'd, and the *Gospel* nothing else but the *Law* reveal'd. Indeed the whole *Old Testament*, in a manner, is a *Mysterious*

\* Quid est enim  
quod dicitur  
Testamentum  
Vetus nisi oc-  
cultatio Novi?  
Et quid est  
aliud quod di-  
citur Novum  
nisi Veteris  
revelatio?  
St. Aug. de Civ.  
Dei, l. 16. c. 26.



Shadow, a *Prophetical* and *Figurative* Representation of the *New*: Which some observing, and finding what excellent use our Saviour and his Apostles made of the *History* and *Prophecies* of the one *Testament* to confirm and illustrate the Doctrines of the other; have indulged so long and unwarily to the contemplation of the *Allegorical*, that they have quite neglected; and, at last, utterly lost and even renounc'd the first and *Literal* Sence. But this is an unreasonable affectation of an extravagant and foolish Extreme.

It was the infinite Wisdom and Power of God, that so contriv'd, ordered, and overrul'd Affairs in the first Ages of the World, that they might aptly prelude, typifie, and represent that great Undertaking, which he was to set on foot in the latter Times. Hereby making the Age of the *Patriarchs* and the *Law*, but a long Preface or Introduction to that of the *Gospel*. Indeed, to speak properly, we are to Date the *Gospel* from the time of the first Publication of it, which was immediately after the Fall, as we all know: From that happy Moment all the hopes of Heaven, of a future Endless Life of Bliss depended wholly on the Birth and Death of the *Messias*. Christianity therefore commenced about Four Thousand Years before the first *Christmas*, I mean, before the actual *Incarnation* and *Nativity* of the Son of God. It is then no Novel and Uptart Doctrine, not a Modern or New invented Discipline; but far the most Ancient, the *Senior* Religion of the World.

Παλαιότατη  
καὶ πάντων ἀρ-  
χαῖότατη ἡ  
Θεοσεβεία  
τῶν ὁ-  
ντων.  
Euseb. Dem.  
Evang. l. i. c. 8.  
Πρεσβυτέρα  
ἐστὶν ἡ  
ἐκείνη.

Al-

Almighty God, for wise and weighty Purposes, did not think fit to put the *Gospel Dispensation* presently in practice, with all the *Power* and *Demonstration*, all the Lustre and Advantages, with which, in the *Fulness of time*, it was to appear and be recommended to the World. This Delay left room for many previous Passages and a preparative Dispensation, which did help to introduce the *Gospel* with the more efficacy and glory. Hence we have great confirmation of our Faith from many and plain *Prophecies*, whereby we are enabled effectually to silence and shame both the *Jewish* and *Heathen* Adversaries of our Faith. For none now can resist the force and clearness of the Evidence, that ariseth thence; but such who wilfully shut their Eyes, and *chuse Darkness rather than Light*: It is to the great advantage of the *Gospel*, that it succeeds the burdensom Oeconomy of the *Law*, the *Pelagogy* of which Discipline sets off the grace and sweetness of that Liberty, with which Christ hath made us free. But tho the *Messias* was not presently to appear; yet the Providence of God so order'd it, that almost every great Thing that hapned after the Fall should conduce to make up a more solemn *Apparatus* and Sacred Pomp, as it were, to Usher-forth the Great *Bridegroom* out of his *Chamber*, and introduce him into the World.

The two first Notable Periods are from Mans banishment out of *Paradise* to the time of the *Flood*, and from thence to the giving of the *Law*. In the  
former

former, Mankind had many sad Proofs and Experiences of the corruption of their own Natural Inclinations, and consequently of the great Necessity of a Saviour. Whilst Almighty God thus *in times past suffer'd all Nations to walk in their own ways*, as *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* told the Men of *Lystra*, he *left not himself without Witness*, though they were *without Excuse*, but sent unto them *Enoch* and *Noah*, and other Preachers of Righteousness: so that their Condemnation was most just, and *Death reigned from Adam unto Moses*, over them that had not sinned after the *similitude* of *Adams Transgression*. This was so Evangelical a Work, that *St. Peter*, according to a well grounded Interpretation of that somewhat obscure place, seems to ascribe it to Christ himself, who, by the Spirit, *went and preached* unto those that *were disobedient, when the Long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah*. Indeed Repentance, and Mercy, and pardon of Sins were the peculiar Conditions of the *Gospel*; Therefore it was very fit that those gracious Indulgences should be tender'd to the World by the Author of the *Gospel*, the *Mediator* of that *Covenant*, even the Holy One of God: But this bountiful Offer was obstinately rejected by that obdurate and irreclaimable Age. Upon this the Divine Justice proceeded to the long threatned Judgment, opened the Floodgates of Heaven, and shewred down Vengeance on the Rebellious World, in a Deluge of *Waters*, as he will, one day, of *Fire*, on unrepenting Sinners.

Pet. 3. 21.

This was a serious and sad Period, and must not pass without a new Intimation of a Saviour. And accordingly we learn from St. *Peter*, that the *Ark* floating on the surface of the Waters, and so preserving Eight Persons from the Common Ruine, was an early *Type* of Christian *Baptism*, by which we are initiated into the *Church*, signified by that *Ark*, which contain'd in it all the Church God then had in the World. He had destroyed the Enemies of this Little Flock by a mighty Ruine. And so will it happen, but more eminently and compleatly, in the *Antitype*. None will escape the All-devouring Gulph, not of perishing Waters, but of unquenchable Fire, but those only that get into the *Ark* of God, or, at least, put no wilful Obstacle or Bar against their admission thereinto. This Parallel of the *Ark* and the *Church*, together with the Doctrine that attends it, runs through the Writings of many of the Ancient *Fathers*; but I must not stay to trace it, or to lament, that so important a Point is no more consider'd than it seems to be in this Age.

The next remarkable Adventure we meet with, is that of *Babel*, a fit Emblem (and so received by the Church) of what was afterwards transacted at *Jerusalem*. For as God then by dividing the *Languages* of the daring Builders, blasted the insolent Attempt of that Rebellious Crew; so did He at the Feast of *Pentecost*, by *Cloven* and Divided *Tongues*, another wonderful multiplication of Languages, baffle and

confound the combined Opposition of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, against himself and his Holy Child *Jesus*.

In the next place I may mention to you those two famous Types and Forerunners of Christ and the Christian Faith, *Melchisedek* and *Abraham*; One of which bore the express Character of our Saviour's Person, and the Adventures of the *Other*, together with those of his Family, made up a long and large Exemplification of his Life and Doctrine. *Abraham* desired to see the Day of the *Messias*, and he saw it and was glad: Here then we have a *Christmas* in the Old Testament. For *Abraham* saw this Day and kept it holy: The Feast (it seems) rejoic'd the Heart of that Great and Religious Prince. He receiv'd an explicit Promise of the *Messias*, and that more than once, and had a Revelation made to him of the Gospel-state. This was that Προεγγέλιον, which the Apostle refers to, when he tells us, That the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto *Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed. Thus did *Abraham* become the Great Patriarch of the Christian Faith, the Father of the Faithful, an Honour not unworthy the Friend of God, as he is stil'd by God himself.

The Types are still plainer as you descend lower; As in *Isaac* his Son, his only Son, as he is stil'd, the Son whom he loved, the Son of the Promise, born by Prophecy, the Prediction of an Angel, of a Womb

John 8.56.

Gen. 12.3.  
18.18.  
22.18.

Galat. 3.8.



that was dead, as was that of *Sarah*; then led to death with his *Typical Cross* on his back, to be Sacrificed near the very place, where his great *Archetype*, our blessed Redeemer, was afterwards actually Sacrificed upon the Cross. The Day as well as your Patience would fail me, if I should tell of *Sarah* and *Hagar*, and the Twelve *Patriarchs*. Indeed, the whole succession of this Family seems designed for so many *Types* and *Symbols* of the *Messias* and the *Gospel-state*. *Jacob* and *Esau* in the Womb, and several Passages of their Lives signified that Great Event, which was to come to pass in After-times, that the *Younger* should be prefer'd before the *Elder*, the *Gentile* should get the Blessing from the *Jew*; the very thing we happily experience at this Day. There was a famous Visit of Angels, as they are stil'd, made to *Abraham* long before this, which I might have remembered to you; of which, One is universally concluded to be the Son of God; even He of whom afterwards it is said, *Jehovah* from *Jehovah*, the Lord from the Lord

Gen. 19. 24.

וַיִּרְדּוּ  
אֲנָשֵׁי הַמַּלְאָכִים  
וַיִּשְׁרֹפוּ  
אֶתְּסוֹדֹם וְאֶתְּגֹמֹרְרָה  
בְּאֵשׁ וּבַשָּׁרִיף

rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha Brimstone and Fire out of Heaven. And that Fire and Brimstone, that Sodom and Gomorrha are Types sadly and certainly significative of that Infernal Lake of Fire and Brimstone, which shall Eternally burn all those that resist the merciful Overtures and Manifestations of the Gospel. The famous Wrestling of *Jacob* with the Angel, interpreted by the Ancients to be the Son of God, serv'd as a Type of *Christ's* Sufferings and Temptations. *Joseph* was another remarkable Type

of *Christ*, as appears by his Bloody Coat, his Innocence, his Chastity, his Sufferings, his Advancement unto Honour, and his Feeding of the People.

And now we are come within view of the Sojourning of the Children of *Israel* in *Egypt*, and their Slavery there, a Subject which makes up a considerable part of the *Old Testament*, and is copiously insisted on in the *New*, for the History and *Mystical* Interpretation of it.

I do not pretend to lay down the Reasons of Divine Wisdom in singling out one Family of the whole World, for the Object of his greatest Mercies, and his severest Judgments. Such Speculations are apt to tempt Men to venture too far, and to a too curious Examination of the Methods and Motives of Gods Wisdom in the Administration of the World. That's an Attribute out of our reach: Whatever Appeal he hath been pleased to make to us concerning the *Justice* and *Equity* of his Ways, I do not find, that he ever submitted his *Wisdom* to the Trial and Judgment of a Man. But thus it actually was in the Case before us. All Mankind were equally the Sons of God; but amongst all these it pleased him to pitch on the House of *Jacob*, to make it a Sign and an Example to the rest of Men. Upon these, on certain Conditions, he heaps mighty and miraculous Mercies; and upon these, when highly provok'd, he poureth forth his Vengeance in dreadful and stupendious Judgments. The Account of this their diverse and double Condition makes up  
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the greatest part of the History and Prophecies of the *Old Testament*. The *New* gives us an account of the last Attempt of Heaven to reclaim that People, and of their last concluding Provocation, the Murder of their *Messias*; which, as it was foretold, by filling up the Measure of their Sins, ripened them for that woful Final Desolation of their People, Government, City and Temple, which had been long before predicted by the *Prophets*, and was then more expressly foretold and denounc'd by *Christ* and his *Apostles*. All which ruine, the *Romans*, in Gods appointed time, brought upon that Devoted People; and the World, at this Day, with astonishment beholds, to which that forlorn Nation hath been for this *Sixteen Hundred Years* a Mocking, an Hissing, a By-word and an Abomination.

This was the People, that long continued the *Type* and *Emblem* of the *Christian Church*: And a little Consideration will enable us to expound and apply to our selves the several Dispensations of God to them. The *Devil* is the afflicting *Pharaoh*; our *Lusts* and *Sins* the *Taskmasters* and *Bondage*. The *Blood* of *Christ* is the *Red Sea*; Redemption to us, but Ruine to the *Devil* and his Instruments. *Moses* and *Joshuah* did evidently Personate our *Jesus*, that conducts us to the Land of *Canaan*, the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, through the Wilderness of the World. He is the *Rock* that is smitten for us, and supporteth us in our Journey. He is the *Brazen Serpent* lifted up on *High* on the *Cross*, to Cure us of all the

venemous and malignant bitings of the *Old Serpent*.

But, before we had brought the *Israelites* thus far on this their *Mystical March*, we might have observed the *Blood sprinkled on the Posts of their Doors*, to secure them from the Stroak of the *Destroying Angel*; as likewise their *Paschal Lamb*, of which not a *Bone* must be broken any more than of the *Lamb of God*. But their Food from Heaven, their *Celestial Manna* did plainly signify that *true and living Bread*, which came down from Heaven, and which stands now upon our *Altars* prepared for the *Spiritual repast* of *Devout Receivers*.

But I must not stay to enlarge on so known a Theme. *Irenæus* tells us, in short, that the coming forth of that People out of *Egypt*, and their whole Progress, was ordain'd by God to be a Type and Representation of the Original and Progress of the Christian Church, which was to be gathered from among the *Gentiles*. But it will concern us to have a care, that we do not carry on the *Metaphor* too far, and provoke God, as those *Typical Christians* did, by Murmurings and Rebellion; For the Author of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* observes, that the *Carkases of those that sin'd, fell in the Wilderness*, God having sworn that they should not enter into his Rest.

*Universa, quæ ex Ægypto profectio fuit populi, fiebat a Deo, typus & imago profectiois Ecclesiæ, quæ erat futura ex gentibus.*

*Iren. lib. 4. c. 50.*

*Heb. 3. 17, 18.*

Thus have we taken an hasty View of much above two Thousand Years, so thick set with Figurative Indications of the Kingdom of the Messias.

that it looks like the very Age of *Christ* himself, the Copy or Pattern of the *Gospel*. And it was, indeed, a kind of Primitive or *Patriarchal* Christendom. So that when our Saviour took our Flesh upon him, and, as on *This Day*, appeared upon Earth in order to the establishment of the *Gospel* in all its parts, He was but *ἀνανεούμενος*, as *Eusebius* expresseth it, a Restorer of the most Ancient Religion, that which had been the Religion of the World before *Moses*.

Ἀνανεούμενος  
τὴν παλαιότητα  
καὶ πάλιν  
ἐκτείνει  
Μωϋσέως  
ἐκτείναντος  
αὐτὸν. *Euseb. Dem.  
Evang.*  
Τοῖς παλαιοῖς  
ὁ αὐτὸς τῆς  
ἐκτείναντος  
ἰδέσθαι.  
*Idibid.*

By this Order and Disposition of things God made it manifest that the *Law*, as meerly *Positive*, was not necessary to *Salvation*, that Man could be well without it, that it was to be but a long *Parenthesis*, as it were, 'between the *first* and *second* Christendom, the Age of the *Patriarchs* and that of the *Messias*, something that might have been left out, and well spared, as for any intrinsical Excellency of its own; a meer *Interim*, an Expedient for the present, a kind of *Interregnum*, or a Temporary Constitution. And, indeed, the whole Frame of it look'd forward, and was apparently founded on *Relation*; the chiefest use of it being to point and direct to a better *Covenant*, something greater and more desirable than it self. If you abstract it from that *Typical* and *Relative* respect, it will soon appear much unworthy of its Great Author, the most trifling as well as the most burdensom Constitution that ever was. So that it is no wonder that the *Heathens* found it easie to pick Quarrels with it, and raise Objections against it of that nature. These *Philo*, amongst others, learnedly



labours to remove, but all in vain, because he himself was a Stranger to the true use and signification of the *Law*.

That it was mutable, not established as a necessary, or intended for a perpetual Rule, may be collected even from the lateness of its Date. Had it been otherwise, God would not have suffer'd the Renowned *Patriarchs* of the former *Periods* to have been ignorant of it; those Illustrious *Heroes* I mean, to whose Faith and Vertue he himself gave such ample and honourable Testimony. Nor after the *Law* given, do we find that the neglect of its positive Prescripts was ever objected to those Nations, whose Sins were yet distinctly reckon'd up by the *Prophets* that were sent unto them, as the *Ninevites*, *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, *Idumæans*, *Moabites*, and such others.

The expiration of the Institutions peculiar to the Law was not so properly their destruction or abolition, as their accomplishment, consummation, and attainment of that End for which they were by God instituted and intended. What was merely *Shadow*, must needs become useless, and vanish at the appearance of the *Substance*. Yet several Usages and Institutions under the Law were adopted and introduc'd into the Church, being by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles* improv'd and sublimated into a more *Reasonable Service*. *Circumcision* was advanced into a better *Sacrament*, more useful, more easie, more extensive in its Application. The *Sabbath* became the *Lords-Day*, on which, as it is the *Seventh* part of

Time, we still commemorate Gods Rest on the *Seventh Day*; and as it is the *First Day* of the Week, we celebrate our Redemption from Spiritual *Egyptian* Bondage, and the full Assurance of a compleat Victory over Death and the Grave by the Resurrection of our Lord on that Day. This therefore is become to us a greater *Feast* than the *Jews* could observe on their *Sabbath*. The great *Feast* of Atonement, as well as all other bloody Sacrifices of the Law, was finally accomplished on the Cross; and the memory of That, the Church solemnly recollects on *Good-Friday*. But in this Feast of the Atonement there was something peculiar and of very extraordinary signification, that of the *Scap-Goat*, I mean, on which *Aaron* was to lay his hands, and confess over him all the Iniquities of the Children of *Israel*, putting them on the head of the Goat; and then send him into the *Wilderness*. Thus was Christ, on whom God laid the Iniquities of us all, presently after his Baptism, led into the *Wilderness*, carrying with him all the Sins that had been confess'd by *Jerusalem* and *Judah* at *St. Johns Baptism*: And thus it is, that (not the Goat, indeed, but) the *Lamb* of God takes away the Sins of the World, as the *Baptist* had declared concerning him. I am sensible, that the pleasant contemplation of these Divine Mysteries would easily transport me beyond the proportion of the Time: I must not therefore insist upon any of the rest: Not on *Aaron* the *High Priest*, his *Mysterious Vestments*, and more *Mysterious Consecration*; nor any of the *Oral Prophecies*

Lev. 16. 20, 21.

Mark 1. 12.

John 1. 29.

concerning the great Business of this Day ; those immediately from God to *Adam* and *Abraham* ; or those of *Jacob*, *Moses*, and the *Prophets* down to the expresse Testimony of *St. John Baptist*, the immediate Harbinger and Forerunner of the Lord. And I am sure I need not put you in mind of that which is daily in your Ears, the melody of the *Psalms*, those lofty inspired *Hymns*, which are at once a very *History* of the Birth, Life and Death of the *Messias*, and also the most fervent Petitions, and devoutest strains of Thanksgiving, that the Mouth of Man can utter or his Heart conceive.

Thus *Great*, thus *Holy*, thus *Divine* are the Triumphs of this Day. It is the Birth-day of GOD, the New-birth of the whole World. It is the Day which the Lord hath made, and which *Abraham* saw. It is not a Private or a Modern Feast : We have heard already that it is as Ancient as the Fall of *Adam* : Nay, we read of Grace given in *Christ Jesus* <sup>2 Tim. 1. 9.</sup> before the World began, according to the Eternal purpose <sup>Ephes. 3. 11.</sup> which God purposed in *Christ Jesus* our Lord. That is what was from all Eternity decreed, and presently after the beginning of Time happily put in practice. For *Christ* is the Way and the Door, by which both the first and last Man and all other that come thither must enter Heaven. Neither is there salvation in any <sup>Acts 4. 12.</sup> other : for there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby *Adam* or any of his Off-spring have or can be saved. God himself therefore could not apply more seasonable or effectual Comfort to

our drooping Parents, languishing and astonished under the shame and horreur of their Fall, than to tell them of the *Seed of the Woman*, the wonderful Birth of this Day. Thus do both our *Testaments* run one into the other: They exhibit one and the same thing, even the *Common Salvation*, only under diverse circumstances suitable to the differences of Persons

(a) Unius igitur & ejusdem substantiæ sunt omnia. Iren. adv. Hæres. lib. 4. cap. 2. 1.

(b) Non alterum quidem Vetera, alterum quidem proferentem Novæ docuit, sed unum & eundem. Id. ibid. St. Matt. 13. 52.

and old; as *Irenæus*

(c) Servis quidem & adhuc indisciplinatis condignam tradens Legem, liberis autem & fide justificatis congruentia datus Præcepta, filiis adaperiens suam hereditatem, &c. Ibid.

Rules suitable to their several Capacities and Ages. Well may we therefore be fill'd both with wonder and delight, when we listen to the ravishing Harmony of those two Books of God;

(d) Quis hanc lætitiā divinatorum Sacramentorum, cum sanæ doctrinæ luce clarescunt, non præferat universis hujus mundi Imperiis, etiam inusitatâ felicitate pacatis?

(e) Nonne tanquam duo Seraphim, &c. St. Aug. ad Jan. Epist. 119.

not the *two Testaments*, says he, as the two *Seraphims*, call and cry to one another, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth*? That great and good Man seems to have wrought himself up into a kind of Transport or

and Time. (a) The substance of things is the same both in the *Old* and the *New Testament*: (b) It is one and the same Great *House* older that brings forth things both new and old; as *Irenæus* applieth, to this Matter, that Parable of our Lord. (c) The same Lord and Christ is exhibited in both the Books, dispensing to his Children and Servants Laws and Rules suitable to their several Capacities and Ages. Well may we therefore be fill'd both with wonder and delight, when we listen to the ravishing Harmony of those two Books of God; (d) An Employment and Contemplation, in the Opinion of *St. Austin*, to be prefer'd before the peaceable enjoyment of the Empire of the whole World. (e) Do

or Ecstasie by dwelling long and thinking deeply on such things as these.

From the Considerations which I have now mentioned, and very many such like, which, in this vast and inexhaustible Subject, may be brought to illustrate one *Testament* by the other, I might observe, as *Irenæus* on the same occasion in the place forecited, and also the 43 Chapter of that Book, how justly our Saviour requires, that his Disciples and Apostles, who went to instruct others in the Christian Faith, should themselves be Scribes *well-instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*, and, like the Great Master of the Family, able to bring forth out of their Treasure *things new and old*; that is (saith the Excellent Writer) *without all dispute the Old and the New Testament*. Very pleasant it is, and a great satisfaction to consider, that we are in the self same way to Heaven, which the first and best of Men have so happily trodden; and with this advantage to us, that now it is become far more visible and plain. It was only describ'd at a distance, shewn and pointed at to them; but we are brought and led into it, and may discern the very Footsteps of our Saviour, and tread in them too, if it be not our own fault. The Guide walks before us, and we cannot miss either of our Way or our Reward at the End of it, if we do but follow our Leader, the Victorious *Captain of our Salvation*.

*Es autem quæ  
de Thesauris pro-  
ferunt Nova &  
Vetera, sine con-  
tradictione duo  
Testamenta  
dicit.*

There was never at any time but one true Religion in the World, and that since the Fall has been



no other but Christianity either shadowed and covered, or open and like it self. There is no difference between *Israel of Old*, and the present *Israel of God*, but a few years and a clearer Revelation. They had another Law, indeed, but that did them no good, nor afforded any true Comfort, but as it was sweetened and improv'd by a Saviour. But now the *Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.* They were to expect no remission of Sins without shedding of Blood: But it is impossible that the blood of Bulls and Goats should take away sin. Therefore, we are sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all: There is a *Christmass* in both the Testaments: The first Authors of Mankind, our Fathers, both before and after the Flood, could not be happy by any other means than we their late Posterity, or as St. Peter expresseth it, in the first General Council, *Through the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they.* St. Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew proves, that Christians are properly the *Israelites*, from some places in *Isaiah*, as also from the Notation of the word; A Notion, in the main of it, confirmed by our Saviour and his Apostles, in what they teach concerning the Seed of Abraham, of *Israelites indeed*, and the *Circumcision of the Heart*. I have not time to repeat the Texts. The Sum is, that Christ was at the bottom, and at the end of all: Our claim and theirs is in and through one and the same *Messias*, who tenders Salvation equally to all that will

Rom. 3. 21.

Heb. 9. 22.

10. 4.

10.

Acts 15. 11.

accept of it on his own best, that is, *Evangelical Terms*. The *Patriarchs* and *Prophets* as well as *Apostles* and other *Christians*, were saved by Faith in *Christ*, as the Early Martyr *Ignatius* avers in several places of his *Epistles*; and the same is at large prov'd by *Irenæus*: And *Clemens* of *Alexandria* in his *Sixth Book* of *Stromata* hath the same, with something more of his own concerning *Christs* descending into *Hell*, which I shall not offer unto you.

\* Ev. q. m.  
5. d. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

But thus have we seen, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning*, that when the *Veil* is taken from the Face of *Moses*, he shines forth nothing but *Grace and Gospel*: And this *Veil* is now done away in *Christ*: In *Christ*, I say, *The Almighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, who was, and who is, and who is to come; the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever; the Almighty Child of this Day*. A Day so plainly foretold by the Ancient Prophets, particularly by the Greatly beloved *Daniel* Five Hundred years before the time, that the whole People of the *Jews* were in eager Expectation, and even on the gaze for their *Messias* at the very time when he appeared in the World. And yet, alas! though he stood full before them, and their Great *Baptist* pointed at him, proclaiming aloud that it was He; though the Devils falling down before him, or flying from him in groans and yells, published who He was, and He himself avouch'd

Rom. 15. 4.

2 Cor. 3. 14.

Esa. 9. 6.

Heb. 13. 8.

Dan. 9.

Esa. 6. 9, 10.

vouch'd the same thing, and testified it both by Word and Deed; yet did their Sins make the Old Curse stick so close to them, their *Heart* so *fat*, their *Ears* so *heavy*, and their *Eyes* so *dim*, that they *understood* not what they heard, nor *perceived* what they saw. No noise of *Prophecies* and *Miracles* could wake them out of their Golden Dreams of a Temporal triumphant Prince, with Earthly Crowns and Scepters, Dominion and Greatness: Such must their *Messias* be and bring, or he is no *Messias* for their purpose.

2 Pet. 3. 11.

But he is for ours, I hope, even just so as he did and was to come into the World. But then, *What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* It was the folly and misery of Gods first People the *Jews*, that they trusted to their Privilege of being so stil'd, they took up with that and gloried abundantly in the Temple of the Lord, without ever considering what great Obligations were thereby laid on them for Holiness and Obedience. A Prince has little reason to be satisfied with the loud Professions of Loyalty and Obedience from such as take no care to express those boasted Vertues in any thing but in words: Nor will the *King of Kings* accept of the demure Hypocrisie of those, who, as the Prophet expresseth it, *Come* before him as his People *cometh*, and *sit* and *hear*; but will not *do*. It is Mockery and not Religion to have *Lord*, *Lord* in the Mouth, and no fear and reverence of him in the Heart. *Judas* could cry *Master, Master*, when he

Ezek. 33. 31.

he kiss'd his Lord and then betrayed him. *If I be a Master where is my Fear, saith the Lord of Hosts.* We are all ready to claim a share in the Mercies and Blessings of *this Day*, some interest in, and relation to the Saviour, that was born in the City of *David*, even Christ the Lord. We are willing to take our denomination from him, at the least; we would be call'd Christians, and he must be esteem'd and stil'd our Lord. But he disowns and renounces all such Relation and even Acquaintance with those that conform not to his Laws. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, says he, and do not the things which I say: I know not whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity.* That peculiar People of God found by woful experience, *that he is no respecter of persons, but that in every Nation he that feareth him and worketh Righteousness is accepted of him.* And that it is most just for God so to do, seems to be the main design of that so much disputed and mistaken Chapter, the Ninth of the Epistle to the *Romans*: But, if God spared not the *Natural* branches, on the like provocations, most certainly, he will not spare us. And, if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven. The Promise was made unto *Abraham* and to his Seed, not the Natural Seed of his Body; but the Children of his Faith: *For they which are of the Faith, the same are the Children of Abraham;* as we are told in this Chapter of my Text. And if we do the Works of *Abraham*, then are we the Children of *Abraham*, according to the esti-

Luke 6.46.  
13.27.

John 8.39.

mation of our Blessed Saviour, who best could judge of such a matter. It is greatly our concern then to clear up our Title to the Saviour of *this Day*, which can no way be done but by the observation of his Laws, the imitation of his Practice, and *walking worthy* of him, who hath *called us with an holy Calling*: This is truly to keep *Christmäss*, the most Christian, and to God the most acceptable way of celebrating the *Nativity* of our Lord. St. Paul does not only assure us, that *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*; but more particularly, that the Punishments of the *Jews* were recorded, that they might be *Examples to us*; nay, that they *happened unto them for examples, and are written for our admonition*. Therefore that I may still use the words of that *Apostle* of the *Gentiles*, *Let not us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed*.

What can we imagine was the meaning of this Eternal Consultation of Heaven, this operose Provision, and almost unconceivable Condescension that was made to bring about *this wondrous Day*, big and swell'd as it is with *Miracles of Mercy*. We cannot conceive, that God, who never needlessly contradicts or discomposeth the Order that he himself hath establish'd in Nature, would thus heap Wonder upon Wonder for mean and little purposes, much less for any thing unbecoming the Purity and Perfection of his Nature. He did not then descend from his Eternal Throne, and step into the Womb of a poor Virgin, become an impotent Infant, and a Man as miserable

Rom. 13.4.

1 Cor. 10.6.

Ver. 11.

9.



ferable as Earth and Hell could make him, meerly that afterwards, there might arise a Generation of Men who should be only *stil'd Christians*. The Effect was to bear more proportion to the Cause. The design of Heaven was upon our Natures, not our Names. God propos'd to himself the Salvation of our Souls, and, in order thereunto, to *redeem us from all iniquity, and* Tit. 2. 14. *purifie to himself a People zealous of good works*. He took our Nature upon him, that we might take his, that is, be made *partakers of the Divine Nature* and Eternal Glory. For these great Purposes he liv'd and died; for this he preach'd, published and bequeath'd to the World the most perfect Precepts, the most incomparable Example, the most glorious Promises, the most dreadful Threatnings, together with all sort of the most inviting, convincing, and perswasive Arguments, that the Wisdom, Goodness and Power of Heaven could contrive and furnish out for the benefit of Mankind.

*May we therefore all sincerely endeavour to cast away the Works of Darknes and put upon us the Armour of Light, now in the time of this Mortal Life, in which our Saviour came to visit us in great humility, and let us purifie our selves even as he is pure, that in the last day when he shall come again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his Eternal and Glorious Kingdom, where he now lieth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, to which undivided and ever-blessed Trinity be all Honour and Glory, Power and Dominion, now and for ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.